

PROJECT PURPOSE

Example 1

The increased demand for locally grown produce is driving consumers to farmers markets. However, consumers are not always aware of the location and operating hours of local markets. TDA will explore ideas to inform the public about farmers markets, including hours, locations and the time of year that farmers markets are open. Farmers markets certified by TDA offer consumers quality, locally grown products. Banners and advertisements for farmers markets will identify them as certified farmers markets and encourage the consumer to stop and shop.

Example 2

X specialty crops are in high demand by State Y's farmers' market consumers. Unfortunately, many farmers' markets lack selection of these varieties. The purpose of this research project is to show the feasibility and benefits of growing X specialty crop to encourage specialty crops' growers to incorporate new growing methods and into new or existing operations.

POTENTIAL IMPACT

Example 1

This project will impact the entire State's specialty crop X industry. Approximately 3000 farms are involved in growing these crops. These crops represent approximately \$1 billion in farm income and are the largest crop in State A. In order to continue the growth this industry has experienced in recent years, the industry recognizes that they must be proactive in developing and conducting marketing efforts to increase market share.

Example 2

Existing and new specialty crop growers in State A taking part in the grower education will receive an extensive education on many aspects of participating in specialty crop production and direct retail marketing. It is estimated that the number of specialty crop growers that will be participating in the educational workshops is 50. Through grower education, farmers will be exposed to information on how to grow crops and successfully sell their produce at direct-to-consumer markets.

Example 3

The XYZ Program estimates that over \$30 million in farm income resulted from crops developed and marketing through this program in 2004. This is evidence of the success and potential for this program. New specialty crop varieties being developed through this

program will enable the State's farmers to be competitive in growing and marketing these specialty crops. These new crops could provide \$10 - \$15 million in additional farm income.

Example 4

It is estimated that approximately 100 professional nurserymen, 50 Extension Agents and Botanists, and 500,000 consumers could potentially be exposed to the results and benefit from this research project.

EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Example 1

There will be two primary sources of outcome measures. The first measure will be the number of farmers participating at farmers' markets. An estimated 150 farmers sold at farmers' markets across the state in 2006. Education sessions will increase participation by farmers in farmers' markets by 5 percent in 2007, by 10 percent in 2008, and by 15 percent in 2009. Secondly, this project will result in a 20 percent increase in product volume and variety available at markets from 2006 to 2009. It is expected that it may take some farmers one to two growing seasons to transition to new crops.

Example 2

Farm income from specialty crop X in State A in 2005 was \$700 million. Our goal is to increase annual sales \$20 million by 2010 through an advertising and public relations campaign, development of consumer website, and marketing through trade shows and buyer meetings.

Example 3

One measurable outcome is to have 100,000 consumers use the specialty crop X industry website annually by 2010. This will measure the effectiveness of the project in reaching State A's consumers, one of the target audiences.

Example 4

The school educational/promotional project will increase the volume of locally grown fruits and vegetables sold in State X schools by 15% over the next 3 years from the current 20,000 cases annually.

Example 5

Increase demand of specialty crop products at the farmers' markets by 15 percent through promotion. It is currently estimated that the specialty crop industry in State A currently has total net sales of approximately \$2.5 million dollars with direct sales at farmers'

markets. With a 15 percent increase in demand we hope to see this dollar amount change to \$3 million dollars in direct sales for State A producers.

Example 6

This retail promotion campaign will impact all State A's specialty crop producers that sell product to the major retail grocery stores in the selected new market area through increased product movement of approximately 15 percent.

GOALS

Example 1

The goal of this project is to continue the operation of the XYZ Program. New specialty crops will be developed allowing State A's farmers to be more competitive in fruit and vegetable markets, providing opportunities for new sources of income for State A's farmers.

Example 2

Expand the number of schools participating, volume of produce sold, and number of farmers participating in the XYZ program. Develop an increased appreciation among children for locally grown produce and its health benefits.

Example 3

This goal of this project is to increase the number of State A farmers following food safety practices to decrease the risk of microbial contamination and increase buyer demand for State A's produce.

WORK PLAN

Example 1

Goal or Measurable Outcome	Activity	Method	Who	Timeframe
Develop Buy Local Campaign Plan	Develop campaign components, timeframe	Hire a consultant to help develop and carry out the plan	Agricultural Marketing Council, State Dept. of Agriculture industry representatives	0-6 months

Supplemental Handout to Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Presentation

Increased website visits	Advertising and consumer education to drive consumers to website	Monitor website using Web Trends technology	Ag Marketing Council, State Dept. of Agriculture, Consultant	6-18 months
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Example 2

Initial production of materials for distribution and display items will begin in April 2007, or as soon as funding is available, and must be completed by June 2007 when grocery retail in-store demonstrations and promotions begin. The State department of agriculture's marketing division will create informational materials and marketing tools to inform consumers of the benefits of selecting the State's produce and plants and the availability of produce and seasonal plants. Additionally, State department of agriculture marketing employees will offer these materials at consumer events such as wine and food festivals and nursery retail demonstrations beginning in June 2007. The State department of agriculture will work with project partners throughout the year to track participation in promotional events.

Example 3

Variety trials will be run in replicated plots on certified organic land at XYZ Horticulture Research Center with crops planted at appropriate times during the spring and summer of 2007. More than 300 cultivars from 42 crops will be included in the variety trials. Evaluation of season extension for four crops (specialty crop W, X, Y and X) and insect exclusion will be performed in six high tunnels using three different covering materials. Field Days will be planned for late June and mid-September 2007. Results of the research will be prepared for publication and web-based distribution during the fall and winter of 2007.

Project Oversight

Example 1

Oversight for this project will be provided by the Marketing Coordinator of the State Department of Agriculture, who will ensure that the work is completed within the required time frame and complies with all program regulations. He has extensive knowledge and experience in working with agriculture producers and farmers markets. The Marketing Coordinator shall provide a written report to the State Commissioner of Agriculture every six months. Such reports will be available to USDA upon their request.

Example 2

The State Department of Agriculture will be heavily involved with the planning and execution of this project. Staff of the Market Development Division of the Department of Agriculture will have daily contact with the Manager of the State's Farmers' Market to ensure proper administration of the grant. State Department of Agriculture staff and the Market Manager will communicate daily through meetings, telephone calls, emails, and other necessary means.

Project Commitment

TDA will work with several commodity groups to build a quality program that is beneficial to the Texas horticulture and produce industry. The Texas State Florist Association will organize growers to participate in the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit in Houston, Texas. The Texas Nursery and Landscape Association will help provide informational materials for the Horticulture Landscape Guide. The Texas Watermelon Association and the Texas Produce Association will provide guidance in developing retail promotions to best support and enhance the competitiveness of their industries. TDA staff from all departments and regions will work together to make sure each project is run in accordance with federal and state guidelines. Letters from several of these partner organizations expressing support for these projects are attached to this application.

Multi-State Project

Grant request:	\$50,000
State A portion	\$30,000
State B portion	\$20,000

State A and State B will work together on the project through our 10 member board of directors. The board has members and associates serving on committees including research, advertising and promotions, market development, State A's legislation, State B's legislation, transportation, water and long range planning.

This project has the full support of both the State A and State B Departments of Agriculture. State A will take the coordinating role in monitoring the progress of this project.

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Application Guidelines

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds shall be used for projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops that benefit the specialty crop industry as a whole. Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual because these projects do not enhance specialty crop industry competitiveness. Under the SCBGP, single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Applications for grant funds should show how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

The following are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable projects:

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business.
- A State requests grant funds to make grants to individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual business.

Examples of Acceptable Projects

- A State requests funding to contract with a university to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which can be shared with many growers throughout the State.
- A State requests grant funds to help improve and expand domestic farmers markets which benefits a wide array of specialty crop producers.

Further guidance on the SCBGP can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/fv.